

Canada and Mexico aren't just important markets for my State. Each of our States stands to gain with the ratification of the USMCA. This landmark trade deal will create over 175,000 jobs, which will help to strengthen our economy and America's middle class. This overdue modernization of NAFTA will benefit workers in a wide array of industries. Manufacturing, tech, and more stand to gain from the USMCA. It will add much needed certainty for farmers and ranchers, who currently need every market they can get. Rural America is struggling right now, and approving this agreement will provide a shot in the arm for the rural economy.

The ratification of the USMCA, along with the recent deals that have been struck with South Korea and Japan, will show the rest of the world that the U.S. is open for business. Proving that the U.S. is negotiating in good faith to reach mutually beneficial outcomes for all parties that are involved could really move the needle in other ongoing trade standoffs.

The House leadership needs to get on the stick. The USMCA is too important for our Nation's economic future for it to be sitting in limbo while House Democrats focus on partisan goals.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BOOZMAN). The majority leader.

## LEGISLATIVE SESSION

### MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to legislative session for a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

### EQUAL PAY

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, this past October, the young women who make up the Burlington High School girls soccer team in Burlington, VT, made a statement: The time for equal pay is now. All they are looking for is for their leaders—leaders like us in Congress—to show the courage to make it happen.

It all began one Friday night in October, when, after scoring a goal to put them ahead in the closing minutes of a game against neighboring rivals South Burlington, four exuberant members of the soccer team removed their jerseys to reveal T-shirts emblazoned with this simple phrase: “#EqualPay.”

The reception to their silent statement was reminiscent of that moment when the U.S. Women's National Team made history in July, winning its second consecutive World Cup title. After a thrilling win over the Netherlands, the stadium in France was filled with chants of “Equal Pay! Equal Pay!”.

One Friday in October, the stands—though smaller—in Burlington, VT, erupted in the same way. The result? Yellow cards for the offending players, issued by a referee bound by the rules of the league.

The young women of the Burlington High School soccer team became overnight sensations. Within a matter of days, they had sold more than 2,000 of their now iconic simple white T-shirts, raising more than \$30,000 to support the Greater Burlington Girls Soccer League. Men were invited to pay an extra \$4 for the \$25 T-shirt: 16 percent of the cost, to represent the pay gender pay gap in Vermont. Their story was reported by local outlets like VT Digger and the Burlington Free Press, and it was featured on “Good Morning America” and on CNN. It even reached across the pond, where the UK's Daily Mail featured the team's advocacy. I ask unanimous consent that the report from VT Digger be printed in the RECORD following these remarks.

The lesson here is simple, and the voices could not be clearer: Equal pay for equal work should not be controversial, nor should it be challenged. Yet today in Vermont, a woman makes \$0.84 for every \$1 earned by a man. In some States, the gap is as wide as 70 percent. It is inexplicable. It is unacceptable. And it needs to stop.

Marcelle and I are proud to support the young women of the Burlington High School soccer team. We proudly wore our #EqualPay shirts outside the U.S. Capitol, standing in solidarity with these young Vermonters and with women everywhere who are simply demanding what should be theirs: equal pay for equal work.

Earlier this year, after the U.S. Women's National Team's inspiring victory at the World Cup, I reintroduced a simple resolution calling for the Federation Internationale de Football Association, FIFA, to immediately eliminate gender pay inequity and treat all athletes with the same respect and dignity, regardless of gender. It is straightforward. It is common sense. And it is past due.

Following the October game, the referee who issued the yellow card bought one of the team's #EqualPay shirts for himself. I find in that action a simple metaphor: There is simply no longer support for arcane practices that never should have existed. We should heed the call of the next generation and end these discriminatory practices, not just in sports but across the workforce. Equal pay for equal work should be the right of every person. It is as simple as that.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the VT Digger, Oct. 22, 2019]

BURLINGTON GIRLS SOCCER TEAM MAKES WAVES WITH EQUAL PAY ACTIVISM  
(By Aidan Quigley)

BURLINGTON.—When Burlington girls soccer midfielder Helen Worden knocked in the take-the-lead goal during the team's Friday

night game against South Burlington with under five minutes to play, her team burst into a celebration.

Team members took the opportunity to lift their jerseys up to reveal #equalpay T-shirts underneath, with a few removing their jerseys to show the full #equalpay shirts.

While four members of the teams received yellow cards for removing their jerseys, the celebration—and team's efforts for gender pay equality—went viral over the weekend, with an appearance on “Good Morning America,” coverage on CNN and a slew of supportive messages.

The team was inspired by the U.S. women's national soccer team's campaign this summer during the World Cup. Members of the national team filed a federal lawsuit alleging gender discrimination against U.S. Soccer which stated the women's team generated \$20 million more in revenue than the men's team while earning a quarter of what the men were paid.

Klara Martone, Burlington's senior goalie, said that the players were working hard in school and wanted to bring attention to the pay gap in society.

“The idea that we could work this hard and still make less money just based on our gender is incredible to me,” Martone said. “We want to live in our adult lives in a world where we don't have to worry about making less money.”

The girls have sold 2,000 T-shirts and raised a total of \$30,000 as of Monday afternoon.

Worden went to France this summer and witnessed the United States win the World Cup. A chant after the win stuck with her.

“People were cheering ‘equal pay,’ and it was super inspiring,” Worden said. “So I came back and talked to (my teammates) about it, and said we should contribute in some way.”

Martone said that the team originally planned on wearing “equal pay” T-shirts for a dress-up day near the start of the season. But the idea gained steam, and the team decided to open up T-shirt orders to the community.

Junior right back Ruby Wool said at the start, having the boys soccer team wear the T-shirts was a “big victory” for the team.

“Those small little steps we were taking were so big to us, and with each thing everything is getting bigger,” Wool said. “As of right now, I don't think it's going to get smaller for a while.”

The team was “fuming” when they received yellow cards at Friday's game, Worden said.

As four of the girls received yellow cards, the crowd chanted “equal pay.”

“The good thing about the card was hearing everybody had our back,” senior center back/mid Maggie Barlow said. “That was one of the moments we were like, ‘wow, we have such a big support system.’ It was worth it because that was amazing to hear.”

Coach Jeff Hayes said some members of the South Burlington team came over the referees and requested that they not card their opponents. The cards were an exciting moment for the team, he said.

The four players who received yellow cards had to be temporarily taken out of the game and were not able to check back in before South Burlington equalized minutes later. The game ended in a 1-1 tie.

The effort was applauded by Brandi Chastain, a longtime member of the U.S. national team who famously removed her jersey in celebration of her penalty kick goal which won the 1999 World Cup.

“Thank you @bhsgirlssoccer for standing up, celebrating and taking your jerseys off for #equalpay Proud of you! #rolemodels,” Chastain tweeted Saturday.

Removing a jersey as part of a goal celebration—a popular goal celebration—is an